INDIANA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
Education Steering Committee
September 12, 2006

Critical Questions for
Facilitated Groups

- What and where are the disparities?
- What are our hypotheses-why do we think these disparities exist?
- What are our first steps in addressing these disparities?

Group # One:

-Zero Tolerance
-Cultural Aspects
-Teacher training
-Deem normal-American Midwest
-Still dealing w/ system designed for white males
-American education system not intended to educate
-Not gotten bold enough to transform
-Definitions of discipline have changed
-Teachers driven to get through curriculum
-How much is baggage on the part of the teacher?
-If teachers see behavior in students of color that contradicts their stereotype, they disregard it.
-Professional development needs to be about "whiteness" because 75% of teachers are white females.
-Students of color feel like they have to compromise self in order to be successful-assimilate-sell out
-Actively engage selves in how cultural competence statute is implemented
-Tokenism w/ cultural competence
-Teachers need to understand about families
-Punitive ways of discipline don't work- - need positive reward
-Behavior troubles start in 4th grade
-Literacy skills need to be in place by end of 3rd grade

First Steps/Solutions:
1. Develop intentional plan to eliminate mythology of color-blindness.
2. Teachers need to get to know home life and culture of families. They need to get more involved.
3. Teacher professional development around cultural identity development
4. Positive reward for discipline

Group # Two:

What are disparities?
-Teacher training
-Administration - men 40-50 (Cert at earlier time)
-Need to dissect data, need more info on disaggregate
-Disproportionate teaching force
-Training in classroom mgmt.
-Disparities in opportunity
-BIG JUMP IN EXPULSIONS!

Hypotheses?
-Teachers getting older
-Attitudes "Oh well..."
-Changing students/same faculty
-Young teachers, well intentioned ("I don't see color, just kids.")
-Meeting needs of whole child
-Family value on education
-Different valuing of different parents

First Steps/Solutions:
1.   SSS Inst Video on Behavioral Management in every school!
2.   Share data
3.   Improve pre-service, also
4.   Improve in-service training
5.   Follow-up
6.   Mission/Vision
7.   Understand WHY of behavior
8.   Make norms more explicit
9.   Incentives for teachers, administrators
10.   Enhance community w/ parents
11.   Resources to respond to [ ] needs of students
12.   Positive reinforcement rather than punishment

* Look at and report own data
        -Help to understand data
        -Build capacity

Group # Three:

What?
-Disparate punishment with people of color getting more discipline than whites.
    (Disability left out: 1. Physical 2. Learning disability)
-Disparity in understanding or a misunderstanding of different cultures (AA male, Asian male, etc. getting different responses)
-African American males=Disparity is so big.
-How many teachers are disproportionally female and white, referring and over suspending black males, etc.?
-The way our ed. system set up to meet needs of certain group of students not changed to meet needs of current group of students.

Hypotheses?
-Do most students know what's expected of them?
-Prejudice exists, not just racial
-Preconceived notion about people, different categories of people
-Threat, danger teachers (white females) may feel toward African American male students
-We expect all students to come to school and fit a mold instead of fitting the school to the student, making education responsive to students.
-The culture does not teach a kid that school and ed. is valuable.
-Teachers not well paid
-Teachers perpetuate negatives about students
-Our ed system is stuck and did not change with the times. Is having a hard time changing with the times.
-Disparity in categories of misbehavior (reasons for suspension).
 More subjective for Black students.
-Disparity in getting students, parents involved. Some parents may have had negative experiences with school and so its difficult to get them involved in school, all aspects of school

Solutions:
1.   Individual learning plan for all students.
2.   Make sure the policies and categories of misbehavior are **operational**. Defining explicitly what misbehavior is, e.g., "Disrespect," "Threatening," "Other."
3.   Throw out unclear terms, e.g., "disrespect"
4.   Define more clearly what behaviors justify disciplinary actions
5.   Making it explicit to students what's expected of them at school and why, esp. at elementary level.
6.   Consequences have to be more meaningful than being suspended onto street

Group # 3 Solutions (continued):

7. Stay out of teachers lounge. Teachers not perpetuating negative stereotypes about students
8. We need to re-invent schools to provide excellence for all students, no matter what it takes.
9. Disclosure-Make what is occurring at the school in terms of disparities known.
10. Accurate data publicly reported
11. Cultural diversity training

Group # Four:

What?
-Classroom management (Referrals)
-Type of infractions (Subjectivity)
-Poverty & More Misbehavior???
-Disciplinary definitions (Lack of clarity)
-Cultural interactions
-Elementary vs. secondary level differences
-Relationship to academic achievement
-Leadership

Hypotheses?
-Classroom management
-University preparation
-Inservice experience/professional development
-Lack of cultural competence
-Organizational structure
-Ineffective use of support staff (Guidance/Counseling)
-Disconnect between changing student population and teaching population
-Curriculum Culturally relevant
-Issues related to high needs schools, e.g., teacher turnover

Solutions/First Steps:

1. Disciplining as a part of School Accountability/Improvement Plan
2. DOE reporting of risk ratios
3. Culturally competent/ Relevant curriculum
4. Curricular access (Language Minority)
5. Attract and retain high quality teachers (high quality defined as culturally competent)

Group #4 (continued)

6.   Pre/In service preparation
7.   Include (meaningfully) many stakeholders, especially parents in change efforts
8.   State legislative enforcement/inclusion
9.   Parent involvement

Group # Five:

What?
-Gender and race
-OSS infractions
-Ambiguity
-CRP → equity → differences
-Diversity ↔ Equity
-Disproportionality is subjective, esp. in OSS
-Differences w/ exp.
-Stereotyping behavior
-Anticipatory [ ]
-Historical

Hypotheses?
-Historical
-Stereotyping
-Subjectivity
-Change in population
-Who has the power?
-Expectations
-Who makes changes-Students? Leadership? Parents?
-Who's responsibility is it to be cultural competent and responsive?
-Meaning making
-Age of school personnel?
-Minority teachers refer differently?

Solutions/First Steps:

1.   Difficulty in recruiting educators of color, need for teachers of color to create a diverse environment
2.   Mentors/Role models
3.   Disciplinary policies from top down create resistance (___), originating from peers

Group # 5 (continued)

4.   Communication: ways to talk to parents, time, w/kids
5.   Teachers need to have three contacts with parents, set of clear
        requirements and steps: a. parent contact
                b. conversation w/ children about behavior plan

6.   Have positive communication.
7.   We short best practices. We need to share best practices and what's
        working.
8.   Share the PROCESS vs. not just PROGRAM
9.   Data longitudinal/ Buy in for ALL OUR CHILDREN
10.   Correcting/addressing inequities requires "unequal" treatment.
11.   Address the issue at different ages in different ways.
12.   Funding
13.   Cultural Competence professional development for teachers
14.   Standards for communicating with parents and children